

Flatheads and Spooneys: Fishing for a Living in the Ohio River Valley. By Jens Lund. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995. Pp. xiv, 209. Illustrations, maps, figures, appendices, bibliographical essay, index. \$24.95.)

"The river gets in your blood," says lower Ohio River fisherman Roy Lee Walls. "It's just something you don't believe in giving up" (p. 6). In *Flatheads and Spooneys* folklorist Jens Lund describes the fascinating culture of those who fish for a living in the lower Ohio River valley. "River fishing is a folk occupation," Lund writes. "River fishermen are an identity-conscious group who share occupational customs, beliefs, and expressions" (p. 154). Fishing knowledge, technique, and custom are orally transmitted by fisher folk who share character traits such as individualism, innovation, nomadism, coarse behavior, a love of the natural world, and a disdain for those modern folk who pursue less adventurous lifestyles on "the bank."

Flatheads and Spooneys is based on Lund's extensive field research in the 1970s and 1980s among fishermen, marketers, cooks, boatbuilders, netmakers, musselers, pearl and shell dealers, and their families, from Evansville, Indiana, to Cairo, Illinois. These recorded oral histories enable Lund to let fisher folk do their own talking much of the time, an approach that enlivens and authenticates this pathbreaking scholarly work. While Lund is interested in oral traditions such as songs and folktales (including the "giant catfish" motif), his forte is researching and describing material culture. Much of *Flatheads and Spooneys* thus details the making and use of hoop nets, jumper lines, fish traps, mussel brails, and fishing boats, as well as the different kinds of fish and mussels that fishermen catch. Quoting liberally from firsthand accounts, Lund follows the fishing process from dawn to dusk, through the cleaning, marketing, and cooking of the catch. Initiates to dietetically incorrect foodways can even learn how to batter and fry a "fiddler" properly and how to serve it up with "hot corn sticks" just as they do at Kaylor's Cafe in Cave in Rock, Illinois (p. 131-33).

Lund's narrative provides a wonderful relief from the jargon-laden mantra that dominates contemporary "folkloristics." A solid analytical thread runs throughout and enhances this highly readable book. "Differential identity" (p. 156) is the theoretical tool Lund uses to characterize and analyze fisher folk culture and myth. Why do Ohio Valley fishermen endure the "insecurity, low return, and adversity" that characterize their trade? Because, writes Lund, fishing provides them "the satisfaction of being independent and feeling close to the river and its environment" (p. 152). It also provides them with a rural mystique, and in a modern, industrialized society such a mystique is priceless. Thus, alongside its many other

accomplishments, *Flatheads and Spoonneys* provides yet another example of the ubiquitous Turnerian frontier myth in modern North American folk culture.

Flatheads and Spoonneys is a well-researched and important book about a heretofore unexplored midwestern occupational folk group. It obviously is and will remain the best scholarly description and analysis of Ohio Valley fisher folk, and every university library in the trans-Appalachian West should possess a copy. Because it is also a well-written and engaging narrative, many Ohio Valley residents and other interested laypersons will want to order a copy for their local library or purchase one for the bookshelf of their fishing cabin or houseboat.

And, in case you were wondering: A "spooney" is a paddlefish (*Polydon spathula*). "Flathead" is a moniker for the yellow "mudcat," a name that also served to describe (derogatorily) some of those early Ohio Valley folk who feasted on the succulent *Pyloodictis olivaris*.

MICHAEL ALLEN is associate professor of history and American studies, University of Washington, Tacoma. He has authored the prizewinning *Western Rivermen, 1763-1861: Ohio and Mississippi Boatmen and the Myth of the Alligator Horse* (1990); *Rodeo Cowboys in the North American Imagination: A History of Popular Culture* (forthcoming); and edited with Mary Hanneman *Frontiers of Western History: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Western History* (forthcoming).

Emigration and Settlement Patterns of German Communities in North America. Edited by Eberhard Reichmann, LaVern J. Rippley, and Jörg Nagler. (Indianapolis: Max Kade German-American Center, 1995. Pp. xxxii, [382]. Notes, tables, figures. Paperbound, \$28.00.)

This book consists of twenty-three articles based on papers delivered at a conference held in 1989 to commemorate the founding of the millenarian community in New Harmony, Indiana, by Johann Georg Rapp and his followers 175 years earlier. A keynote address by the late Günter Moltmann, an eminent historian of German immigration to America, is accompanied by a useful introduction by the editors.

The articles range widely within the field of German communal life in America. Grouped somewhat artificially in seven chapters, they treat, for example, religious sects, church-based settlements, secular communities, regionalism in settlement patterns, and the role of socialism. Some are broad in scope, such as an overview of German settlements in Canada; others are narrowly focused, such as the founding of a Lutheran congregation of Osnabrückers in White Creek, located south of Columbus, Indiana.